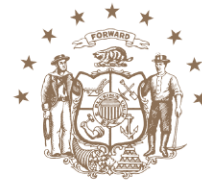




# SONDY POPE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
80TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **REPUBLICAN VOUCHER EXPANSION TAKES MORE THAN \$16 MILLION DIRECTLY FROM WISCONSIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN 2015-16**

MADISON –Today, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) released the enrollment counts for the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) and the Racine Parental Choice Program (RPCP). Representative Sondy Pope (D-Cross Plains) spoke today on the costs of these programs and how they affect public education and middle-class taxpayers.

“Wisconsin’s Constitution requires that an equal education be provided to our children free of charge and free of sectarian instruction. Yet Republicans are bleeding millions from our public schools to pay for students attending primarily religious schools.”

According to the figures, 75% of new students in the statewide voucher program were already attending a private school. This does not account for students who had previously attended those schools with tax-payer funded vouchers.

Governor Walker’s budget, otherwise known as 2015’s Act 55, changed the way that vouchers are funded – largely at the expense of public schools, local property taxpayers, and middle class families.

“Despite the empty promises made by Republican supporters of this expansion, districts around the state are being forced to scramble to either cut their budgets or ask local property owners to pay for students attending a private school,” said Rep. Pope. “I have yet to see any actual 'data' on private school scholarships creating opportunities for students and find it disingenuous for Republicans to use that claim to advocate for expanding vouchers. What we do know is that over the 25-year existence of vouchers in Milwaukee, there have been exactly zero peer-reviewed studies showing the program benefits the community or the state.”

“By continuing to expand the voucher program without even basic accountability standards, Republicans have shown a willingness to inflict policies on the middle class that only benefit private-school special interests that give so generously to Republican campaigns.”

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